

PMS, Lakes, Car Sharks

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Summary: Frank writes off Rachel's much loved Mufti car. So what can they get to replace it? What can it take to decide on a new car...?

PMS, Lakes, Car Sharks

*Disclaimer: So I like Honda Accords. And I dislike Fords. I take no responsibility for anything in here. Anyone try to sue me, I'll sue your pants off for harassment. You've been warned!!! Hmm, Rachel got really annoyed in this. But it's not my fault she's got a foul temper. Ah, poor wee Frank. His ego's still a bit dented, me thinks. He'll live. No one dies... apart from that weirdo cult fulla. This is entirely fictional. Any similarity to real life things is purely coincidental. I've been watching Shortland Street too much.

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Author's note: Ow my hands hurt. Woohoo! Finito! Done! Yippee! Time to celebrate! This is another L-----O-----N-----G story, but please stick with it! And PLEASE send me feedback, you lot are still ignoring me. Thanks to Esme, Nat Williams, Funky, Spunky, Jacqueline Heads and everyone else who's been helping me and reading my stories on the net! I love the Internet. Yay! Without the net I wouldn't have anyone apart from Nat to read my stories. And thanks to Funky and Spunky, I think I'm gonna write a episode script and send it over to good old Hal and see what he thinks... Yay.

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PMS, Lakes, Car Sharks.

>By Nikki Kirk

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>The wheels squealed violently as Frank threw the steering wheel around, pulling the car around the corner. Rachel held onto her seat for dear life, wondering how Frank had managed to bribe her into suffering through this terror. She didn't have to look far for the answer, the answer was a sticky, mashed up mess in her clenched hand. The chocolate bar had melted and was now smeared on her white knuckles, trying to escape from the car. "Damn PMS!" She thought.
"Frank! Bloody hell! SLOW DOWN! Watch out for the bush!"

Not the pole! Watch the lights! FRANK!" Rachel tried to keep calm, but her rock-hard composure was fading quickly.

>"Shuddup Rach, I'm not gonna crash it!" Frank took a moment to look at Rachel, then looked where he was going again to see a corner.
Oops. Frank was going too fast for the corner. The green magna tried to pull itself through the corner, but failed miserably, bumping over the kerb, hooning over the footpath, crashing through a white picket fence, then sliding sideways towards a large fishpond. Pieces of gnomes who had previously been sitting quite happily on the side of the pond went flying everywhere, the brightly coloured painted clay bits making a kaleidoscope spraying out from under the wheels. SPLASH!!! The rear wheels slid over the edge of the pond and sank into the muddy water, the front of the car gripping onto the bank for dear life. Luckily the water wasn't deep nearer the shore, and the back of the car didn't sink below the rear tyres. Rachel's first reaction was to scream at Frank. "FRANK!!! YOU IDIOT!!! WHAT DID I TELL YOU? YOU'VE PROBABLY WRITTEN OFF THE BLOODY CAR!!! WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU?!" Rachel screamed blue murder, lunging at him with the lasers in her blue eyes turned to "decimate".

>"What? Hey, we're alive!" Frank opened his eyes, then grabbed Rachel's boney wrists as they flew into his face.
"I DON'T BLOODY CARE! YOU ARE A TOTAL ASSHOLE, HOLLOWAY!!!" Rachel screamed at him.

>A uniform car drove into the field where the pond was and parked. The two officers sprang out of the car and ran over to the drowning green Magna. "You two okay?" The first officer waded into the water and pulled Rachel's door open.
Rachel glared at him, then began yelling again. "WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK? MY PARTNER JUST CRASHED INTO A BLOODY POND!!! NOW I'M GOING TO RUIN MY EXPENSIVE SUIT AND SHOES WADING OUT OF THIS MESS!" Rachel looked like she was going to kill someone.

>"No you're not, Detective. I'll carry you to the bank." One of the uniforms quickly plucked the angry detective out of the car seat and carried her to the muddy, grass-covered bank as if she was a small child.
"Thank you." Rachel said coldly and glared at the officer brushing the non-existent wrinkles out of her suit.

>"Any time." The young officer grinned.
Rachel grunted, then glared at Frank who was wading out of the murky water by himself, the other uniform close behind him. Frank was trying to keep a sheepish grin off his face as he looked up to meet Rachel's glare, then he scuttled over to another car which had just arrived. Rachel watched him all the way, her eyes burning into his back. She then looked at the car. It was a pitiful sight. The once proud-looking car was sulking in an over-sized fishpond. The back tyres had sunk below the waterline, into the mud below. What you could see of the metallic green paintwork had lost its happy shine, and most of it had disappeared underneath a thick layer of mud and pondweed. "Oh, shit." Rachel groaned, then turned back to see what her wanker of a partner was up to now.

>"Oh no!" A female officer stopped dead in her tracks and was staring at the car.
Rachel whipped around to see what she was looking at. She shouldn't have looked. The car was slowly sliding into the pond, the front wheels making a feeble attempt to hold onto the muddy bank. Rachel stood there and watched the car's front wheels slip and slide into the water, the boot was now submerged in the murky brown lake. The car kept sliding until the boot hit a large rock about four metres off shore. The bonnet was submerged now too, and all that was showing of the car were the windows and the roof. Bubbles were emerging from the interior, and the murky water slowly inched up to match the level outside. "HOLLOWAY!!! YOU KILLED MY CAR!!! I'LL NEVER

FORGET THIS!!! BLOODY HELL!!!" Rachel bellowed at the top of her lungs, then sprinted over to where her partner was being questioned.

>"YOU BASTARD!!!!" Rachel lunged at him, landing on his back.

Frank stumbled around for a few seconds, trying to regain his balance on the slippery ground, but he was fighting a losing battle. SPLAT!!! Frank fell face first into a mud puddle. "RACHEL!!!!" Jeff appeared out of a squad car and sprinted over, grabbing his detective around the waist.

>Rachel squirmed, trying to get free of his grip, but Jeff hauled the slim woman off her partner without much effort. Jeff held her back while Frank picked himself up, brushed the mud out of his eyes, then turned around to meet Jeff's cold glare, and Rachel's laser beams.

"Frank, would you kindly explain to me what the hell happened? You could've killed both yourself and Rachel." Jeff said calmly, the calm before the storm.
"I was going around the corner and the car began to skid a little bit. Then I misjudged the speed correcting it, and the car aquaplaned on some surface flooding. It was an accident."

Frank straightened his tie, then grinned at Rachel who tried to lunge at him again but was held back by Jeff.

>"An accident. Frank, your driving is pathetic. I talked to the occupants of the car behind you and they said they had to back off because you were pushing the car way too hard! Either you go back to Police College and brush up on your driving skills, or I'll suspend you without pay for two weeks, is that clear?" Jeff barked at Frank, still holding a seething Rachel around the waist.
"Yeah." Frank muttered.

>"What?" Jeff had a warning tone in his voice.
"Yes, sir." Frank grunted, looking at his feet.

>"That's better. Damn, Frank! You could've killed someone." Jeff shook his head in disgust, glared at Frank then released Rachel to savage any self-confidence he had left.
"Frank! What did you think you were playing at out there, eh? Answer me! I'm never letting you drive after this, you realise that don't you?" Rachel grabbed Frank's chin in a fierce grip, staring right into his eyes.

>"Yeah, I'd guessed that already." Frank was now looking like a puppy who'd pooped in his mistress' shoe.
Rachel let go of his chin, then stomped off to find someone else to yell at. "Rachel? Frank? Oh my god, what the hell?" Helen sprinted up to Rachel.

>"Helen? What are you doing here?" Rachel asked her.
"I heard what had happened. I just had to come and see if you were okay. Are you?" Helen hugged Rachel, then stepped back to survey the damage.

>"I'm fine, didn't even get wet thanks to a young uniform. Shit. Frank may never recover from the severe beating to his ego though." Rachel smirked, looking back at Frank who was wandering around aimlessly.
"Jeff may never forgive him too. And the story gets worse. See the house over there? It's Jeff's. He just moved in, and this pond contains his beloved fish." Helen stooped down and grabbed a piece of gnome.

>"Oh, shit. He doesn't blame me for this does he?" Rachel asked slowly, hoping that Frank would cop the lot, so to speak.
"No, you're lucky. How come you weren't driving? Both you and I know how bad his driving is! Oh dear. Patsy. His favourite." Helen looked down at the smiling piece of clay in her hand, wondering why it wasn't scowling at what had happened.

>"He bribed me." Rachel looked at her feet and twisted them around on the grass.
"He what? With what? And how?" Helen stuttered, amazed at what she was hearing.

>"He bribed me with chocolate. PMS! Don't look at me like that! You know what I'm like!" Rachel pouted and messed up the grass some more

until she felt Jeff's eyes burning into her back.
"Yes. I seem to recall a time when you said that you were "low" on gas, then popped into the petrol station, filled the car up, grabbed a few bars of chocolate, then paid for the lot with your own card. It ended up that you only got \$5 worth of fuel!!!" Helen had a memory like an elephant's.

>"Hmm...." Rachel grinned guiltily.
"I hope you realise you two are going to have to go and find your new cop car together..." Helen brushed her face, trying to hide a sneaky grin, then looked up to see her friend's reaction.

>"WHAT? You've gotta be KIDDING!!!" Rachel howled like it was the end of the world.
Helen just stood there and grinned.

>"Helen? You mean I have to go car shopping with that Ford-loving, macho maniac that wouldn't know a good car from a packet of peanuts! I hate the cars he likes!!!" Rachel whined again, remembering the fuss he put up when the Magna was brand new.
"You'll just have to cope. Oh, and I almost forgot, we were going to get you a new car anyway, and that was going to be worth around \$30 000, but with the \$20 000 insurance money, you can choose your car, any car below \$50 000, alright?" Helen grinned, then walked off to see what Jeff was beckoning her for.

>Rachel was shocked for a minute, then decided that this was a good thing. She wandered off to find Frank.

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>"What? Over my dead body!" Rachel threw a pen at Frank in protest at the thought of getting a Falcon.
"Why not?" Frank pretended to look hurt.

>"I don't like the shape." Rachel snapped.
"Well... Holden Commodore?"

>"Boring. Common. I think not."
"Hmm... Well what do you suggest smarty pants?" Frank gave up, knowing Rachel would hate all of his suggestions.

>"Toyota Corolla?"
"Too small."

>"Toyota Camry?"
"Not fast enough."

>"Vee-dub Beetle?"
"What? Yeah right, be serious."

>"Just testing ya! Hmm, Mitsubishi Magna?"
"NO!"

>"Mitsubishi Diamante?"
"No!"

>"Toyota MR2?"
"What? And where'd we put the suspects? In the boot?"

>"Nah, I'll shove you in the boot if the crim's good looking...Nissan Bluebird?"
"No!"

>"Mitsi Galant?"
"Nope!"

>"Rover?"
"What do I look like, a poofy posh wiener?" Frank spluttered.

>"Yeah, actually... A Honda Civic?" Rachel grinned at the thought.
"Hell no! Too small!"

>"Toyota RAV4?"
"No!"

>"Toyota Celica?"
"Hmm... Again, where do we shove the crims? The boot?"

>"Again, the good looking ones in the car, you in the boot."
"Hmph."

>"A hippie van?"
"A what?"

>"A Vee-dub hippie van?"
Frank just looked at Rachel as if she belonged in a psychiatric hospital.

>"Well fine, we're just going to have to go and test drive all of the models out there and then decide." Rachel grimaced at the thought.
Frank didn't look too impressed either.

>"Don't give me that look Francis Holloway, you're the one that wrote off my poor wee car!" Rachel snapped, propping up her head with her hand, her elbow resting on her desk.
Frank said nothing, just

sighed and looked out the window at the sun beginning to set over the harbour.

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"Rachel! My favourite detective!" Helen grinned as Rachel bounced in the door the next morning.

>"Hey! What about me? Say, Rach, you made a pretty big mess of that car!" Mick stuck his head over the banisters and grinned at Rachel.
"It was Frank! I let the idiot drive! He was the one that killed the poor car, not me!" Rachel snapped defensively.

>"Okay, okay!" Mick put up his hands as if to surrender and quickly ducked back out of view and throwing range.
Helen stifled a laugh and handed Rachel a few messages. "Ta." Rachel said, shuffling through the small pile and heading upstairs to go and severely injure Michael Reilly.

>Mick was sitting behind his desk when Rachel came in, trying to look innocent. Rachel ignored him, she didn't even look at him. Rachel sat down at her desk and picked up the phone to dial a detective at the Central Sydney Police Station, throwing a short glance at Frank's desk to see if he was in yet.
"Hi, it's Senior Detective Constable Rachel Goldstein here, is Detective Powers there please?" Rachel said to the person who'd picked up.

>"Thanks."
Mick sat at his desk watching Rachel. He decided to try to annoy her by staring at her for as long as he could. Rachel ignored him, she was in no mood to play Reilly's childish games.

"Detective Powers, Detective Rachel Goldstein. You called?" Rachel was still ignoring Mick.

>"Detective Powers, Detective Rachel Goldstein. You called?" Mick mocked Rachel, trying to annoy her even more, little did he know that Rachel was probably going to kill him with her police issue pistol when she hung up.
Rachel glared an icy glare at Mick and went back to listening to the Detective on the phone while Mick gave up trying to annoy her and wandered downstairs to get a coffee. "Uh huh. So you think it could be connected? Right. My partner's not here yet, so is it possible for you to wait a few minutes until he turns up?" Rachel asked, relaxing in the silent, empty room.

>"Great. Yeah, I'll see you soon. Bye." Rachel hung the phone up in its cradle and looked at her watch.
9.15am. Frank would be coming through the door any second now. Rachel listened for a moment and heard Frank's usual grand entrance. "Morning boys!" Frank's voice floated in an open window from the jetty.

>"Morning Frank! Hard night?" Tommy laughed.
"Yeah, just terrible." Frank agreed loudly, his voice getting clearer as he moved closer to the building.

>"Oh great. More of Frank's bragging about his Sheilas." Rachel said to herself, shuffling some case notes into order.
"Morning Helen! You're looking gorgeous today." Frank's voice sounded right on cue.

>"I am, aren't I?" Helen's usual reply came drifting up the stairwell.
"What about me, eh?" Tayler was pretending to sound insulted.

>"What about you?" Frank said, again right on cue.
Tayler whined in protest, and Rachel heard Frank's footsteps coming up the stairs, then walking along the corridor, then coming through the door. She didn't look up until he sat down, but then shot him a look which roughly translated to "Where the hell have you been?". "Morning, Rach!" Frank chirped, scribbling something down on a piece of paper.

>"Yeah." Rachel replied, as usual.
"Anything new?" Frank asked.

>"Yeah. We're off to the central city to meet Detective Powers, and

before you ask, no his first name is not Austin, it's Daniel." Rachel snapped.
"In what?" Frank asked slowly.

>"What? What the hell are you talking about Francis?" Rachel snapped, her patience wearing thin.
"The car? Yesterday? Remember?" Frank said slowly.

>"Oh, shit. Great, that's just great." Rachel suddenly clicked.
"Should I go down and try to nag a car off Helen?" Frank suggested.

>"Yeah. Yeah, good idea. Hurry up before I try to do you some serious damage." Rachel said sharply, glaring at Frank.
Frank scurried out the door and jumped down the stairs. "Helen, buddy old pal..." Frank began.

>"Old? Who says I'm old?" Helen snapped teasingly.
"Fine, let's start that again. Helen, buddy young pal..."

>"Yes? What do you want this time?"
"A car."

>"Frank! Oh jeez. Fine! But there are no mufti cars left in the yard, you'll have to use a squad car." Helen moaned, unlocking the top drawer and producing a set of keys to a Commodore.
"Thanks Helen! I owe ya one." Frank began running up the stairs.

>"Oh, and Frank?"
"Yeah?"

>"Rachel's driving. Jeff's said that you are not allowed to drive until you pass the police college test. You'll be sitting it on next Friday. Today's what, Wednesday. You've got 9 days to learn how to drive." Helen was getting some sort of pleasure out of this announcement.
"Damn. Thanks Helen." Frank continued up to his, Rachel's and Mick's shared office.

>"Good and bad news." Frank waltzed into the office looking proud of himself.
"What, chocolate is free and the world's going to explode in five minutes?" Rachel still had her sarcastic sense of humour, even if Frank had destroyed her poor car.

>"Close, but no banana. Helen's given us a car, but it's a marked car." Frank got himself ready to dive behind the desk just in case Rachel really did try to kill him.
"Oh great. Just great. If we get called to arrest someone, they'll see us a mile off! Perfect!" Rachel snarled, her eyes turning into laser beams.

>"At least we've got a car!" Frank offered.
"Yeah, great Holloway, we've got a car." Rachel hissed sarcastically, heading out of the door and snatching the keys off Frank.

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"When are we going to get the car?" Frank hung up his mobile phone after a quick talk to Helen.

>"What? Frank, we haven't even decided on a car yet!" Rachel snapped tiredly.
"I know that. Helen's given us the afternoon off to find a car." Frank explained.

>"Well, I guess we'll be looking for one after lunch then, eh? And before you ask, no we're not going to get any car unless I agree to it and like the car, alright? Especially since I'm never letting you drive again." Rachel sniggered.
"Fine..." Frank said dejectedly.

>"What number is it?" Rachel asked Frank, turning into Maple Grove, the venue of the last night's murder.
"13. Unlucky for some, eh?" Frank said grimly, looking at the houses.

>The street was a quiet little cul-de-sac, not a place you'd expect a murder to happen, but after working in the force for as long as Frank and Rachel had, murders usually happened where you least expected them to. Rachel spotted number 13 and slowed the car outside behind a whole pile of other cars. She looked at the house. It was a double level brick and cedar house, quite large and with two modern cars in the driveway. The pair of Detectives climbed out of the car and began to head inside. Rachel made a mental note of the numberplate, just in

case they didn't realise it with all of the other identical cars around. As they approached the police line, they examined the driveway for any hints of a vehicle taking off. Apart from some oil, there was nothing to indicate this was the case, as with the other murders this suspect was suspected to have done.
The Ashley case was a baffling one. A lack of clues had caused the investigation to have still been unsolved after two long months. It had started with the gruesome stabbing of an expectant mother, then continued through until now with the death toll now including two toddlers, an old man and his wife, and now a teenage girl. All of the murders happened on a Tuesday night, at around the same time. The bodies were all placed on the driveway, arms out and legs straight, like a crucifix. No clues had been found but the murder weapons... wooden handled carving knives with the letters R.I.P. carved into them. Every second murder blood was used to write "God's sinners must be destroyed" on an interior wall, usually in the master bedroom or on the refrigerator in the kitchen. And all of the victims were wealthy Christian churchgoers.

>"Oh, poor kid." Rachel had to turn away and regain her composure after seeing the 16-year-old's bloody lifeless body lying on the driveway surrounded by cops galore.
"Oh, jeez..." Frank felt like his stomach was going to jump out of his throat.

>A middle-aged guy with black hair hurried over to the pair. "Can I help you?" He said, looking tired.
"Detectives Goldstein and Holloway." Rachel said quickly, flashing her badge at the distressed-looking guy.

>"Oh! Pleased to meet you, I'm Detective Powers. Call me Dan." Dan shook their hands, a weight visibly lifted from his over-worked shoulders.
Dan led Frank and Rachel over to the body and explained the case to them. It was exactly the same as the last few murders, except for one thing... this time there were two fingerprints...

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"Tayler! Can you find a match for these?" Rachel handed Tayler a piece of paper with the murderer's fingerprints on it.

>"Sure. I'll bring the results up to you when I get them." Tayler smiled at Rachel, taking the paper.
"Thanks." Rachel went upstairs to find Frank who was calling the girl's parents to tell them the dreadful news.

>"I'm so sorry Mrs Marsden, please don't hesitate to call me if you remember anything, anything at all." Frank said gently to Tanya's distraught mother.
"Damn it, that's gotta be the worst part of the job." Frank said after he'd hung up, rubbing his eyes wearily.

>"Yeah, tell me about it. Found anything on the database?" Rachel asked, with a sigh, plopping herself down at her desk.
"Nah. Just hope there's a match for those prints, otherwise we're buggered until the next murder." Frank groaned pessimistically.

>"Yeah." Rachel agreed, heaving another sigh.
"Rachel, Frank! Are you going to love me for this or what?" Tayler bounced into the D's office.

>"Depends, have you got us a Lamborghini?" Rachel asked quietly.
"No, better than that."

>"Nothing could be better than a Lamborghini." Rachel commented with a sly grin.
"Will you let me tell you already?" Tayler was almost bouncing off the walls with excitement.

>"Well?" Frank prompted her.
"I found a match! His name is Marvin Henderson. He belonged to some weird religious cult that believes in destroying what the call sinners, wealthy people and their offspring. He was rumoured to be the leader, but he disappeared after a mass

suicide ten years ago in Darwin. There's already warrants out for his arrest on charges of murder." Tayler explained.

>"We love you!" Frank jumped over his desk and gave Tayler a large kiss on the cheek.
"Thanks Tay!" Rachel ran over and hugged her, then grabbed the keys.

>"We're off Helen!" Frank called over his shoulder as the two Detectives shot out of the front doors.
"What the heck?" Helen looked at Tayler who had just made it down the stairs before the rampage.

>"They're off to arrest the Ashley killer." Tayler explained.
"Oh." Helen replied with a grin.

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"What, so we park it a block away and walk?" Frank asked Rachel as she grumbled about the uniform car.

>"The others are coming for backup, so I don't think so." Rachel sniffed.
Frank grinned to himself and looked out of the window at the sparkling blue harbour, and the city gleaming in the distance. It was stinking hot, being midsummer, and it was just as well the car had air conditioning otherwise they would've been roasted Detectives by then if it hadn't. Rachel pulled over in front of number 13, Cullen Way, and waited for the others to arrive. A few cars began pulling up, and soon all the necessary backup was in place. The Ds put on bulletproof jackets as per the usual drill, and geared themselves up for meeting the deranged psychopath behind the scruffy brick walls of the boxy 50's house. "You ready?" Rachel asked Frank, pulling her gun out of her holster.

>"Ready as ever." Frank replied, not sounding too sure.
"Let's go." Rachel led the way to the front door, comforted by the knowledge that about a dozen guns were behind her, waiting to shoot the bastard if anything went wrong.

>She signalled to the others that they were going in. A crash sounded from the back of the house, and at the same time they broke down the front door and ran in yelling. "Police! Come out!" Frank yelled, other officers rushing by them, guns drawn.
"Police! Show yourself Henderson!" Rachel slid into the main bedroom.

>She stopped dead in her tracks. He was before her, lunging at her with a knife. Her mind flashed back to the power station where she'd nearly died. No, that wasn't going to happen again! "Stop or I'll shoot!" Rachel yelled with all of her strength. "BANG!!!!" The shot reverberated around the walls, echoing from every corner. Other officers ran in. Marvin Henderson was lying on the floor, a shot through his heart. Rachel lowered her gun and turned away. Frank came in, knowing what had happened. "It's all part of the job, mate, it's all part of the job." He muttered, noticing Rachel's expression.
"Part of the job..." Rachel repeated, pulling herself back together.

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"So, you two are off car shopping, eh?" Helen asked, clearly amused.

>"Yep!" was Rachel and Frank's reply.
"Any ideas what you'll bring back?" Helen asked mischievously.

>"Nah." Frank and Rachel both shook their heads.
"Well, have fun!" Helen stifled a laugh at their expense.

>"Commodore?" Frank suggested to Rachel as they walked through the doors.
"Say that one more time and I'll shoot you Holloway." Rachel scowled at Frank, leading the way to the carpark.

>"Falcon?" Frank suggested.
"NO! I refuse to own another Ford!!!" Rachel yelled at him, ignoring the laughs from Gavin and Tommy.

>"Well what do you suggest then?" Frank asked.
"I don't bloody

know right now, okay?" Rachel hissed.

>"Co..." Frank began.
"Another word and I'll give you a free castration, Francis James Holloway." Rachel snarled, glaring at her partner with her death rays.

>Frank shut up, not surprisingly. The pair climbed into the car, and headed off into the city. Frank was silent for the whole way, which genuinely amazed Rachel. "Where to first?" Rachel asked Frank when they got onto a street with a whole pile of car dealers.
"Holden." Frank instructed.

>Rachel decided not to argue and pulled into the yard.

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>22 car dealers and 35 cars later, Frank and Rachel finally found themselves at Honda Cars. Frank looked totally sceptical, and Rachel wasn't terribly sure about this either. But they headed into the showroom and had a look at the models. After a bit of heated discussion, they decided, with the help of a car shark, to try out the 2.3i Accord. After a bit of driving around they decided it was good. Comfortable and relatively fast. But they decided the engine wasn't big enough. So, they tried out the 3.0i, V6 model. Finally, they'd found a reasonable car. "You sure about this? I mean, it's a Honda!" Frank was prejudiced to Australian cars.
"Yes. Stop being an idiot." Rachel said, pulling into the car yard, relieved to have finally found a prospect.

>Frank wasn't sure about this. But, ultimately, Rachel was right. It was *really* her choice since she'd never permit him to drive again. So he gave up and let her decide for herself. She didn't like the Commodore because they were "too common", she didn't like the Falcon because, well, it was a Ford, and she didn't want another Mitsi because she said she was sick of them, having had to drive two Magnas. "Any good?" The car shark, Tony, came wandering over to greet them like long-lost friends.
"I'm not sure." Rachel fibbed, trying to get the bargaining out of the way.

>"They're nice cars, my favourite, I must say!" Tony grinned a stupid grin.
"What's the price?" Frank asked bluntly, stifling a snigger at the look of shock that flashed across Tony's face.

>"Uh, well, for you, \$40,995." Tony grinned.
"Which model? I want the leather." Rachel said sharply, leaving no room for compromise.

>"Oh, that model's \$47,995, but for you, \$47,000." Tony chuckled, his potbelly rippling as he did so.
"Including a spoiler. \$44,000." Rachel bargained.

>"Uh..."
"And alloys." Frank added.

>"They're on the car." Tony laughed nervously.
"Not *those*, those." Frank pointed to the flashiest mags on the rack in the showroom.

>"Okay, top model with CD player, boot spoiler and mags, \$46,000." Tony was afraid of these people, they were the ones that got good deals.
"\$44,500." Rachel offered.

>"\$45,900." Tony counter-offered.
"\$44,600, not higher." Rachel barked, enjoying the look on his face.

>"\$45,000." Tony offered.
"Sorry mate, \$44,600, not a cent more." Rachel said impatiently, folding her arms, putting her wait on one foot, and looking at the car shark sideways.

>"Okay. \$44,650 and I'll throw in two Honda T-shirts." Tony offered, pointing at some polo shirts on display.
"Hey, they're nice Rach, what do you think?" Frank eyed up the white one with navy embroidery.

>"Hmm... yeah. You've got a deal. I take small, he takes large." Rachel grinned cheekily.
"Righto, and those mags..." Tony pointed

to none in particular, and wrote something down on a pad of paper.

>"No, those mags." Frank walked over and leaned on the most expensive and most attractive mags of the lot.
"Oh, yes, sure." Tony looked worried, but wrote down the correct name.

>"What colour, Rach?" Frank asked, nudging his partner in the ribs.
"Uh, purple." Rachel knew the look in Frank's eyes. He was enjoying this.

>"We don't have purple, I'm sorry." Tony stated, pointing to a colour chart.
"I want purple though... oh well. That dove blue colour." Rachel pointed to an extremely light blue colour.

>"Righto." Tony wrote that down too.
"When will we get it if we pay for it today?" Rachel asked quickly.

>"Uh, in a week." Tony said, distractedly.
"Too long. Tomorrow we need it. We're police and we need it tomorrow." Frank was enjoying torturing the poor man.

>"Uh, police, eh? Um, Oh, we've got one on the roof I think! Yeah, came in yesterday. Was going to be a demo model, but it's still brand new." Tony said thoughtfully.
"Same model? Do we get a discount?" Rachel asked quickly.

>"Same model, and sorry I'm on the bare bones of my backside now, so a discount's out of the question. It's just got to have the mags fitted. If you want to wait for 15 minutes you can drive it away." Tony suggested.
"Can we see it first?" Rachel asked.

>"Uh, do you mind if I ask why?" Tony said nervously.
"Instincts. If I don't have a good feeling about it, then I won't buy it." Rachel said slowly and carefully so the guy would understand it.

>"Oh, yes, sure. Follow me." Tony led the way to a lift.
As they stepped out onto the roof, the detectives looked around for a minute or two. Heaps of cars gleamed in the sunlight, waiting for their new owners. Tony hurried over to a car in the corner. "Here it is! Brand new, never been on the road."

>The pair walked over and looked at the car. Rachel had a good feeling about this car, so she smiled reassuringly at Tony. "Yeah, it's good. We'll take it."

>Rachel proudly drove the car back to the Sydney Water Police Headquarters at 4.30pm, Frank beside her in the passenger's seat.
"Well?" Rachel asked.
"Well what?" Frank asked back.

>"Does it get your approval?" Rachel asked.
"I 'spose." Frank grinned.

>"Well, are we going to try out the radio?" Rachel changed lanes to head down to the waterfront.
"I guess." Frank turned it on.

>"Nice." Rachel grinned.
"Not bad... Plenty of gadgets to keep me amused..." Frank laughed evilly.

>"Try it and I'll shove you in the boot." Rachel snapped, smacking his hands away from the volume knob.
The car turned into the carpark and slowly drew to a halt. Half the technicians almost fell over when they saw Rachel and Frank in the car. Rachel honked the horn and half the station came out to see what they'd bought. "What the... a *Honda*? How'd she nag Frank into that?" Tommy asked Gavin who was just as flabbergasted as he was.

>"Oh my goodness... leather?" Helen sprung down the steps to the carpark and ran over to try out the seats.
Chief Inspector Hawker emerged from the deep dark depths of his office to see the new recruit. Rachel and Frank climbed out to let the others have a look.
"Sir, what do you think?" Rachel asked cautiously.

>"Hmm." Jeff went to the driver's door and popped the bonnet.
"Not bad... not bad at all... in fact, quite good." Jeff smiled and gave

his nod of approval.

>

>
"Ready for the big test, Frank?" Helen sniggered when Frank walked in the next Friday morning.

>"You bet, Helen! Which car am I taking?" Frank asked.
"Uh, your choice I suppose, but you've got to promise not to crash it." Helen smiled sweetly.

>"I'll take Christian Cullen." Frank referred to the newly named Honda Accord, named after the horse, Christian Cullen, who surprised everyone by winning every race he attended.
"Rachel's got the keys." Helen smiled at Frank and went back to work.

>"Say, Helen, who's testing me?" Frank suddenly asked, backing up from the stairs.
"Rachel." Helen had to pinch herself to prevent herself bursting out in laughter.

>"EH?!" Frank's voice cracked a high in disbelief.
He ran up the stairs and into their office to find Mick and Rachel discussing something. "Ah, Holloway, you ready?" Rachel put on a straight face while Mick cracked up into peals of laughter.

>"Yeah. Come on Goldstein, I'll show you! I'll take you on!" Frank teased, beginning to pretend box with Rachel.
"Oi! Time!" Mick yelled between laughs.

>"You coming Holloway?" Rachel challenged Frank, handing him the car keys roughly.
"Yeah, you bet I'm coming!"

>The pair threw challenging glares at each other all the way downstairs and through reception where Helen and Tayler were watching in amusement. The pair made their way down to the car park. "Right Holloway, show me yer stuff!" Rachel hissed, bringing out her weapon - a clipboard.
"Fine, I will!"

>"And don't cheat!"
"I don't cheat."

>"Pff, yeah whatever. Follow the course, and you have to do it in under 30 seconds without hitting more than three cones to pass." Rachel pulled a stopwatch out of the glovebox.
"Start your engine." Rachel instructed.

>Frank turned the ignition. He revved the engine impatiently. The car seemed like it was ready to go as well. "Ready? Good. GO!" Rachel started the stopwatch and Frank slammed his foot down on the accelerator.
He hooned around the first corner. So far, so good. He controlled the car's aquaplaning on the second corner. So far, so good. He did a handbrake turn on the next corner. So far, no cones down. He went through the fourth corner, sliding over an oil patch, knocking down one cone with the rear bumper. "Bugger!" Frank thought.

>Finish line. It was right ahead through two corners. 20 seconds down. Frank swerved the car violently through them, tires screeching with delight at the challenge, the engine revving impatiently, roaring and squealing the tires in heavy acceleration. One down, one to go. Frank threw the car around the next one, racing down the short straight. "STOP!" Rachel clicked the stopwatch and looked at Frank.
"Well?"

>"26.2 seconds matey! I'm still not letting you drive." Rachel laughed as the car drew to a halt.
Frank got out of the car, trembling due to the adrenaline rush. The spectators looked on, waiting for the announcement. "26.2!!!" Rachel yelled to the crowd, and the whole station burst into applause.

>"Thanks Rach!" Frank hugged her tightly, then bowed to his audience of "adoring" fans.
"Thank you, thank you very much. Flowers and donations are to be sent to the D's office." Frank bowed again.

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>
At Cutters that night, the station celebrated Frank's victory. He could now drive. But no amount of convincing would persuade Rachel

to let him! "Speech, speech, speech, speech!" The station called at Frank.

>"Okay, okay," Frank grinned, standing up, "I would like to thank firstly, myself, secondly my brilliant teacher, Senior Detective Constable Rachel Goldstein, thirdly the car that took my to victory, our very own Christian Cullen!!! Yay! And lastly I'd like to thank Cutters for putting up with us nutty, noisy sods every time we solve a case or have something to celebrate!".
The whole bar applauded Frank's wonderful impromptu speech, and the station stayed drinking, laughing, and telling stories for the rest of the night.

>
THE END!!!

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>*****

>Jeez did that one take a while! I'm finished! Hooray! Well, please send me feedback! My e-dress is sydneygirl2b@hotmail.com okay? Cool! Thanks! Hope you enjoyed it!
Nikki.

> <p><p>

End
file.